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February 27, 1979

Dear Senator Byrd:

Thank you for your letter of February 1 in which you requested information on behalf of your constituent, Mr. Joe Teague, concerning the disposition of the remains of the Jonestown, Guyana deceased.

The United States Air Force removed 913 bodies from Guyana to Dover Air Force Base, in Dover, Delaware. Our government was requested by the Government of Guyana to remove the bodies. To date, 648 of the bodies have been identified and 265 bodies have not been identified. More than 200 of the unidentified are children. As of February 15, 343 bodies had been released to the next of kin, and 570 unclaimed and unidentified bodies remain on the base.

The Department believes that transportation and burial of the remains is a private family matter and the responsibility of the next of kin. Please find enclosed sample copies of several letters that the Department has sent to the next-of kin. It is, however, recognized that a number of the bodies may remain either unclaimed by the next of kin or unidentified.

On January 23, a California Superior Court in San Francisco granted the Emergency Relief Committee 30 days to submit a plan for the transportation and burial of the bodies that still remain at the Dover Air Force Base Mortuary. The court is presiding over the dissolution of the People's Temple Corporation. The Emergency Relief Committee is asking the court to disburse People's Temple assets to finance the plan the Committee is preparing. The Committee has asked the assistance of the Department in developing the plan. The Department has agreed to cooperate fully with the Committee in this regard. While it is hoped that the court will accept the Committee's plan, the final decision is, of course, up to the Superior Court.

The Honorable
Harry F. Byrd, Jr.,
United States Senate.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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I hope this information will be helpful to you in replying to your constituent. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Jay A. Rini at 632-3712.

Sincerely,

Douglas J. Bennet, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for
Congressional Relations

Enclosure:
as stated.

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